

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (canceled)
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (canceled)
5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) Apparatus for binding wire around an object, comprising:

a feed member for feeding said wire, said feed member including a driven feed wheel for feeding and stretching said wire, said feed wheel being arranged upstream of the object to be bound, and

separate measuring means for continuously measuring the length of said wire fed by said feeding member, said measuring means being located downstream from said feed member whereby said measuring means does not feed said wire, sliding of the wire in said feed member does not affect measurement of the wire, and said measuring means comprising a runner including a contact surface having a substantially straight profile for contacting said wire and a dolly roll for assuring that said runner and said wire remain in contact.

7. (canceled)
8. (canceled)
9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~7~~1 including a rotation meter coupled to said runner.

11. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 6, further comprising a guide extending around the object, the feed member being located upstream of the guide.

12. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the guide comprises a bar having an open position and a closed position.

13. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the feed member is arranged with the guide so that the bar is in the open position during wire stretching and in the closed position during wire feeding.

14. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the bar has grooves for said wire.

15. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the feed wheel is rotatable in a first direction to feed said wire and rotatable in a second direction to stretch said wire.

16. (currently amended) A method of binding an object, comprising:

a) feeding a predetermined amount of wire to the object, the feeding being performed by a feed member;

b) measuring the amount of the wire as the wire is fed, the measuring being performed in a measuring means separate and downstream from the feed member, so that sliding of the wire in said feed member does not affect measurement of the wire, and said measuring means comprising contacting a runner having a contact surface provided with a substantially straight profile with said wire, and maintaining said runner in contact with said wire using a dolly roll arranged opposing said runner;

c) stretching the wire and disposing the wire on the object; and

d) forming a knot in the wire so as to bind the object.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the step of feeding the wire includes feeding the wire until an end of the wire arrives in a predetermined position.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the step of feeding comprises turning the feed member in a first direction.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of stretching includes retaining an end of the wire while turning the feed member in a second, reverse direction.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of disposing the wire on the object comprises turning the feed member in the reverse direction until the speed of the wire is zero.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 20, wherein the step of disposing the wire includes measuring the amount of the wire as the feed member is turned in the reverse direction.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, wherein the wire is fed into a guide bar when the guide bar is in a closed position.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of stretching comprises stretching the wire while the guide bar is in an open position.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, further comprising, after the step of forming a knot, cutting the wire and drawing the wire back to a predetermined position.